

Buying A Judgeship by Sherman H. Skolnick

If you want a car, you buy it. Or, if you are a thief, you steal it. Business is business. And crime is crime. We presume everybody understands that. It seems fundamental in a real world.

And what about public positions? If you want to be a judge, you, or your friends, buy the job. Or, if you and your friends are crooks, you procure the judgeship by blackmail. Yes, there are honest judges in America, but they are an endangered species. [And we have to someday post a story just about that and how some judges in really important matters have been murdered and the Establishment does not deal with that.]

As a court reform group, Citizen's Committee to Clean Up the Courts, we have been greatly interested in two topics for more than 40 years. (1) How does one become a judge? and (2) In the court rulings that we suspect are tainted, "bought", or just plain crooked, one of the tip-offs is the judge, or panel of judges, issues a ruling containing judicial perjuries, that is, lies they insert based on supposed "facts", not in the record, but made up by the Judges out of the air. [A Chief Federal Appeals Judge from Chicago that does that is the subject of a previous story of mine. See "Chief Crook in Microsoft Mess".]

Starting about 1966, from various sources, we made up a list of "prices" to procure a judgeship in a major venue, like Chicago. To become a state judge in the local court, such as Cook County [or Crook County] where Chicago is. The price at that time was 50 thousand dollars reportedly donated to a key and appropriate official of the Chicago Bar Association, the lawyers mafia union. [Now the filling of vacancies on the bench, temporary or otherwise, leading later to permanent positions, is done through a Judge on the Illinois Supreme Court, the state's highest tribunal. More about that later.]

To "buy" a chair in the U.S. District Court, such as in a sizeable town like Chicago, in 1966, was 250 thousand dollars, "donated" or "contributed" to the Senior U.S. Senator from Illinois who makes the pitch to the President who generally appoints according to such an order from the Senior Senator, especially if it is from the same political cabal.

For a judgeship on a federal appeals court, like in Chicago, that covers appeals from federal district courts in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana---well, the price was a million dollars or then and now, "sky is the limit". Now those were 1966 prices, and the "costs" have gone up plenty since then.

Why would someone, or his cronies for him, pay 50 thousand dollars to be a local state judge? First of all, it beats trying to make a living in the law factories (that is what we call

them) and running up and back to the different courthouses and courtrooms. But more to the point, it enables the would-be judge to take care of his political and financial confederates. And since all too often, justice is for sale in America, it enables a person to become a judge and live above his regular income, through pay-offs of some kind, whether in cash or property, perhaps offshore. [At the time of Shakespeare, litigants made judges rich by giving them gold buttons for a favorable ruling.]

Suppose there were no morality, no laws against thievery and corruption. There you are, the Judge. You are sitting at a table, or Bench, and on the Bench is a matter awaiting your handling, worth a half a million dollars. So what if 25 thousand dollars, or less, falls off the table, into your suitcase. In business, it would be called a commission, a finders fee, or a referral fee.

The really big bucks cases are in the U.S. District Court, such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York. It would not be unusual for a multi-million dollar matter to be on the docket of such a Judge. In the federal courts, you are appointed for life. Federal Judges "shall hold their Offices during good Behavior" so says the U.S. Constitution, Article III, Section 1. For many years it was up to the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee what was "good Behavior" to be determined, rarely invoked during the history of the nation by way of Articles of Impeachment. That power has now been unlawfully delegated to be determined by a "club" of judges called the Judicial Council of the Circuit. That is, the appellate circuit encompassing the particular U.S. District, such as 7th Circuit, Chicago headquartered.

In recent years, the different Judicial Councils referred matters for impeachment to the House Judiciary Committee, against basically honest judges who by their rulings, angered America's secret political police, the FBI, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and CIA. For similar reasons, two black U.S. District Judges were removed by Impeachment, one in New Orleans and another in Florida. In Nevada was removed a federal district judge by a frame-up. He dared pronounce the apparent truth from the Bench, that the Organized Crime Strike Force of the U.S. Justice Department were themselves criminals and mobsters in Nevada. A latino federal judge in California dared pronounce, based on the evidence before him, that the INS and the FBI were the American Gestapo. Luckily, he beat back the Justice Department's framed-up criminal charges against him, but it took a piece out of his life.

Why would a band of "businessmen" get together and "buy" a chair on the federal appeals court, such as in Chicago? And pay one million dollars (in 1966 dollars) or ten million dollars or more in year 2000 dollars? Most all the cases that try to go beyond the federal appeals courts require the petitioner, or loser in the appeals court, to beg the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case. It is done by "knocking on the door" and imploring the high court to open the door. Called Petition for Certiorari. In a recent term of the U.S. Supreme Court, on the first day of Court, 1600 such begging petitions were pending on their docket. The high court judges being old and tired, or lazy, or indifferent, refused

ALL 1600 petitions. Most every one, by collect telegram from the Clerk of the high court, with just one word "Denied", no explanation given. Really? No merit in 1600 petitions?

So for most cases, the various federal appeals courts are the end of the line. Hence, it is wise to buy a chair there. Many of the federal appeals judges own and operate banks, are tied to banks and other financial entities. We call them Banker-Judges. They do NOT disqualify themselves when their financial links are litigants in their court. Guess who wins in their crooked court? [In the 1960s and 1970s, our work led to the jailing for bribery of the highest sitting federal judge in U.S. history. When we accused a 7th Circuit Federal Appeals Judge, to his face, of bribery, he called a press conference. On all the media, this Banker-Judge, Otto Kerner, Jr., (former Illinois Governor), called me a "liar". He tried to get a fellow judge to jail me for "contempt of court". He died an ex-convict, convicted as I accused him. The current federal appeals judges are so angered by our work, they have unlawfully barred me and a TV Show associate of mine, from all the federal courts in the 7th Circuit.]

A cynical reality: often after we have fingered a crooked judge publicly, the Establishment, acting just like the mafia, throws away the judge. He is no longer useful to fix cases. Suddenly the local prosecutors remind themselves that the judge in question does not pay his proper income taxes and such. So they send him to jail. No sensible crook would bother to bribe an already-fingered corrupt judge.

A hard to find book, published about 1962, is "The Corrupt Judge" by Joseph Borkin. He points out from specific, documented examples, the few times in U.S. history that federal judges were removed from the Bench were when the judge got in the middle between two sizeable financial entities. The competing forces crushed the Judge like a bug. But an underdog, such as a patent owner suing a huge corporation for violating his patent, gets nowhere accusing a judge of crooked rulings. [In 1963, our group originally was called the Committee to Protect Patent Owners.] In Chicago, the Banker-Judges on the Federal Appeals court in three separate appeals on the same basic case, overturned a district court jury's verdict, including massive fraud, against Sear Roebuck & Co., in an important patented tool case. The Banker-Judges had a financial interest interlocked with Sears and did NOT disqualify themselves.

In Chicago, a divorce case has led to a supposed federal investigation of possible judicial bribery in procuring judgeships. The estranged wife claimed her husband bought his chair on the local state court for 20 thousand dollars of the family money. The possible bribery probe target has been the Chief Judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, highest tribunal in the State. His home district is Chicago. He has done some strange things reportedly for his political crony, Edward "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak, at one time a Chicago alderman. The judge once appointed a judge from the lowly traffic court to sit in the intermediate court, called the Appellate Court of Illinois. The appointee reportedly did not have sufficient experience to be sitting in the middle level reviewing court.

This Chief Judge who has appointed judges to fill a vacancy in the lower courts is quite a character. He goes around town in a cherry red Mercedes. His residence occupies two floors in an ultra-expensive high rise in the Gold Coast district of Chicago. [Hey, is this all on his judicial salary? Really?]

Part of the supposed probe is how "Fast Eddie" gets his crony, Chief Judge Charles Freeman, to appoint persons as judges to fill a vacancy. It seems some of them reportedly are also in the Nursing Home business with the judge. [Nursing homes are a favorite "investment" for some corrupt politicians. Such as cronies of Clinton and their Beverly Enterprises chain of nursing homes.]

How far will the supposed investigation go? There is an inclination for the FBI, themselves highly corrupt, to quickly hush up the matter. Why? Some have claimed that Fast Eddie, for much of his adult life, has been reportedly a "mole" or stool pigeon for federal authorities, including the IRS and the FBI. Some contend this stems from the way Fast Eddie beat back a murder charge against him, an outgrowth of trying to break a labor union strike in 1959. At the time, Fast Eddie was a law student and claimed he was in class at the time of the crime. Did he strong-arm his teacher for an alibi? Some over the years continue to say so. Some claim Fast Eddie is a key feature in the reported buying and selling of judgeships.

By the time of the new century, the prices to buy a chair in the federal courts has gone way up. At least a million dollars is reportedly required now to purchase you a judgeship in the U.S. District Court in a major district like the one that includes Chicago. Ten million dollars or more is required to obtain a chair in the U.S. Court of Appeals, 7th Circuit, Chicago, one step below the U.S. Supreme Court that rejects the bulk of all the begging petitions submitted.

So, if you want to know how and why America has come to have a corrupt judiciary, covered up by a venal, lackey monopoly press, and cowardly lawyers, well, these are some of the reasons.